









ON THE  
WASTE OF WEALTH.

BY  
WILLIAM HOYLE,

*Author of "Our National Resources, and How they are  
Wasted," &c.*

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*With the respectful compliments  
of the Author.*





## ON THE WASTE OF WEALTH.

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**B**Y wealth we understand anything which society appropriates for use, which can only be obtained by purchase or labour.

The riches of any community are in proportion to the accumulated difference between the wealth which it produces and that which it consumes ; hence it will be clear that whatever may be the production of a country, if its consumption or waste be correspondingly great, its wealth cannot increase.

A comparison of the wants of man, so far as the simple comforts and necessities of life are concerned, with the productive capacities of nature, aided by mechanical skill and appliance, abundantly demonstrates the fact, that, were our resources properly appropriated, and reasonable economy practised, the accumulated wealth resulting from human industry would be something marvellous.

If the time allotted to this essay would permit, I might enter into details to show that the ordinary daily labour of one individual, if rightly applied, will provide a sufficiency to supply in abundance ten persons with all the necessities and comforts of life ; or, in other words, if all persons did their share of work, one hour's labour per day would suffice. Of course, as there are many children, as well as aged and infirm people who are unable to work, it will be manifest that those who can work will have to provide for those who cannot. The progress of invention and the application of

machinery have greatly contributed to this enormous producing power, and it is even now continually augmenting it, so that the part which has now mainly to be played by man is, to superintend the machinery which does the work.

The peculiarly favourable position and resources of our country have very much tended to stimulate and assist the development of this productive power, for whether we view its position and capabilities internally or externally, we find that all its surroundings conspire to constitute it pre-eminently a commercial and manufacturing country.

Internally, our coalmines, ironmines, &c., supply us with materials for the construction of our machinery, and provide us also with the motive power to work the same. The numerous springs, streams, and brooks of our country supply us with water so necessary in the printing and bleaching of textile fabrics; whilst the atmosphere of our island, influenced by the equatorial oceanic current which washes our western shores, is mild and humid, and eminently adapted for their manufacture. At the same time, the proximity of every place to the sea,—the great highway of nations,—the vast extent of our seaboard, and the convenient position of our island, gives us facilities for commerce and navigation, such as no nation in the world has ever enjoyed, and which give us great advantages over other nations.

The vastness of the trade which these exceptional advantages, aided by the inventive genius and industry of our countrymen, have secured to us, will be best appreciated by a comparison of the present trade of the country, as contrasted with what it has been in former periods of our history.

For the purpose of this comparison, I will take our export trade for the five years ending 1772,—100 years ago—for the five years ending 1847,—25 years ago,—and for the five years just completed.

TABLE OF EXPORTS FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM FOR  
THE FIVE YEARS ENDING 1772, 1847, 1872.

1768...16,620,132	1843...52,206,447	1868...179,677,812
1769...15,001,282	1844...58,534,705	1869...189,953,957
1770...15,994,572	1845...60,111,082	1870...199,586,822
1771...19,018,481	1846...57,786,876	1871...222,519,777
1772...17,720,169	1847...58,842,377	1872...255,961,609
<u>£84,354,636</u>	<u>£287,481,487</u>	<u>£1,047,699,977</u>

From these tables it will be seen that, during the 75 years between 1772 and 1847, our trade increased 340 per cent.; whilst in the 25 years, from 1847 to 1872, it increased 360 per cent.; or, in other words, the value of our trade is now nearly four times as large as it was twenty-five years ago, and more than twelve times as large as it was a century ago; and if we remember that the value of manufactured goods, for the same bulk, was at least four times as great a century ago as now, it will make the quantity now exported at least forty times as great as it was then.

If we contrast our position with that of other countries in the world, our immense pre-eminence in this respect will be strikingly manifest. From statistical tables published by Dr. Otto Hübner, of the Prussian Statistical Archives, I find upon adding up the entire commerce of the world, that in the year 1870, whilst our own exports amounted to 200,000,000, the whole of the exports of all the other countries in the world amounted to only about 698 millions, or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  times our own; of these, 300 millions came to this country, so that, deducting this, it would only give 398 millions of trade between all the other countries in the world, as compared to 300 millions sent to us, and 200 millions exported by us.

It would naturally be expected that with this unparalleled trade and the vast facilities it gives us for the acquirement of wealth, everybody would be well to do,

and that pauperism with its evils would have been unknown in our midst.

In order to judge how far this reasonable expectation has been realised, I will give the latest return we have of paupers, and of money paid for poors' and police rates now, as compared with twenty-five years ago.

RETURN OF PAUPERS, AND OF POORS' AND POLICE RATES  
IN ENGLAND AND WALES, FOR THE FIVE YEARS  
ENDING LADY-DAY, 1871, AS COMPARED TO THE  
FIVE YEARS ENDING 1847:—

Paupers.	Rates Paid.	Paupers.	Rates Paid.
1843	£7,035,121	1867... 931,546 ...	£10,905,173
1844	6,900,117	1868... 992,640 ...	11,380,593
1845	6,857,402	1869... 1,018,140 ...	11,773,999
1846	6,746,585	1870... 1,032,800 ...	11,737,613
1847	7,094,657	1871... 1,037,360 ...	12,092,749
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£34,633,882		£57,890,119	

These tables reveal a lamentable state of things, for whilst our foreign trade during the last 25 years has increased upwards of 360 per cent., placing the wealth of the world very much at our disposal, our bill for poors' and police rates has increased 67 per cent., though the population during the same period has only increased 35 per cent.

The returns of the number of paupers published by the Poor-law Board do not, however, give us a complete view of the pauperism of the country. They supply us only with the number of paupers who are on the books of the different unions, say the 1st of January or the 25th of March; but during the course of the year numbers come and go, getting relief for a week or a month, or perhaps for several months, but who are not on the books on the day when the returns are made up. The complete returns of all persons applying for relief during the whole of any one year have never been taken

but once,—in the year 1857; and Mr. Purdy, of the statistical department of the Poor-law Board, says that to get the whole of the applications for relief the number of persons who are on the books on one day must be multiplied by  $3\frac{1}{2}$ . The number of paupers on the books in England and Wales on Lady-day, 1871, was 1,081,926. Multiplying this by  $3\frac{1}{2}$ , it gives 3,786,741 paupers as applying for relief in England and Wales during the year 1871. In addition to these there are large numbers in a state of destitution who never apply to the parish. They get aid from their friends, or they starve rather than ask for relief. If we estimate these at only half a million, added to the others it gives us over 4,000,000 persons, out of a population of 22,000,000, who during the course of the year are in a state of pauperism, or nearly one in five of the entire population of the country.

That this deplorable state of things should exist in a small country like ours—receiving one-third of the entire commerce of the world—is a most humiliating fact. We boast of our Christianity, we pride ourselves in our civilisation, we are perpetually complimenting ourselves upon the industry of our population; and yet with all this, and with the wealth of the world pouring in upon us, we have a pauperism and demoralisation that makes us a bye-word among the nations of the earth.

It is very likely that so far as pauperism goes, the next returns may exhibit a considerable falling off. It would be strange indeed if they did not, for, with an increase of 40 per cent. in our foreign trade during the last five years, and that mainly in articles produced entirely within ourselves, and thus representing, for the most part, only the wages paid for their production; we have had a demand for labour that has given every person a chance of work who could lift his hand, whilst the guardians of the poor (I speak from experience as a guardian) have refused all relief to such as were at

all fitted for work. The probabilities, however are, that if this enormous trade falls off, we shall be as bad, if not worse than ever, unless the causes of the pauperism be removed.

It is often said that a knowledge of the disease is half the cure. So it is, if the true remedy be known, but if, as often happens to be the case, the remedy is a mistaken one, then the disease frequently becomes aggravated by its application. In this matter all sorts of remedies have been propounded by philanthropists and economists. Some have suggested emigration, others a revision of the land laws, or an improvement in the poor laws, whilst others have recommended better dwellings for the working classes, the inclosure of our waste lands, &c., &c. ; many of them good things, but as a remedy for the evils complained of, quite beside the mark. The cause lies in the waste of wealth ; the remedy, in the adoption of such economic regulations, both personal and public, as will bring the appropriation of wealth within the limits of its production, and of man's proper requirements.

These preliminary observations appeared to me to be needful, in order to a practical application of the remarks to follow, for to have read a paper having no practical purpose, would have been like erecting a building that was of no use, merely to display the skill of the architect.

In the discussion of this question many difficulties present themselves, but two pre-eminently. 1st. It is often difficult, nay, impossible to decide the point where the question of waste begins or ends. 2nd. In many cases, when the point has been decided, there are no reliable statistics, or returns, to indicate the extent thereof.

My remarks, therefore, on many points will have to be confined simply to indicating the method, rather than the extent of waste.

By waste I understand an appropriation of wealth for what does not yield an adequate return.

There may be three degrees of this waste. 1st. When the expenditure of wealth yields a partial return; that is, where such wealth might be appropriated so as to yield a better return than it does. 2nd. When the wealth expended yields no return whatever; and 3rd, when the expenditure of wealth, not only yields no return, but produces positive mischief.

In addition to these, there is often great waste occasioned by neglect, or by improper management, by bad and cumbrous legislation, &c. Time will not allow of more than a cursory glance at a portion of these points.

Under the first of these heads may be included the waste arising from many of the follies of fashion. A young woman for instance, of the working classes, wants a new dress. There are half a dozen ways of making and trimming the said dress, so as to make it cost, say £3, £4, or £5, or often much more. The dress costing £3 is every whit as good and useful as the one costing £5, but it has not got all the fashionable trimming which the £5 dress has got,—the only difference is, that the £5 dress is more cumbrous and ugly than the former, but it is fashionable, and for this idea she pays a couple of pounds extra; she thus pays two pounds for which no useful return is obtained. In the upper circles of society this extravagance reaches, perhaps, to the extent of £20, £30, and sometimes even considerably more for a single dress.

Or, it may be, some young man, who wants to be a gentleman, and of course, he must appear like one. His ideal of a gentleman being a man with a ponderous gold watch chain, a couple of rings on his finger, and, perhaps, a silver-headed walking stick. These, with a cigar in his mouth, make him complete. He perhaps pays five or ten guineas for this ornamentation, which is of no use except to exhibit his folly; but it is fashionable. He thus wastes his money for an idea, and often

injures himself by the process, for he becomes too big for earnest work. A double loss is thus inflicted: first, in the expenditure of the money; and second, in the loss of his labour. In all these cases there is great waste. Indeed, in all the various walks of life the curse of fashion is a most prolific source of waste.

There is Mr. Jenkins, a tolerably well-to-do man, he hears that his neighbour Jones has got a carriage and pair. Of course he cannot be outdone, he must be in the fashion, so he wastes £400 or £500 in horses and carriages, and spends perhaps £200 or £300 per annum to maintain them. I say wastes, because he hardly ever needs his carriage, his coachman has to trot the horses out to keep them in health, and if he did need a conveyance, a cab, or a horse and brougham would answer all the purposes he requires. He thus wastes a considerable sum in the outlay, and one or two hundred pounds per annum besides. But, he must be fashionable.

Perhaps Mr. Jenkins is invited out to dinner, and he goes. He enjoys a good dinner, and he gets one where all the delicacies that cookery can invent are provided. Mr. Jenkins cannot do less than return the compliment to his friend, so he arranges a feast, he has all the dainties which his cook can devise, and then there is the dessert—apples at 6d. per lb., grapes, perhaps, at 4s. or 5s. per lb., &c., champagne, port and sherry. By this process he gives his friends indigestion and the nightmare, at a cost perhaps of a guinea each, when, if he had only acted rationally, and spent 9d. or a 1s. upon each of them, they would have been free from the dyspepsia, as well as the nightmare. He thus wastes his money and injures them into the bargain; but he must follow the fashion of good society.

Sometimes this anxiety to be respectable is fraught with the most mischievous consequences. Mr. Jenkins, it may be, is a young gentleman who wants to be great, and shine; he is anxious to be at the top of the



ladder, but he does not like the process of climbing, so he makes a venture,—he goes into business, gets as much credit as possible, persuades all his good-hearted friends to help him, by endorsing his bills, &c. Now and then such an one succeeds, but much oftener fails; heavy losses fall upon all concerned, and in this way the wealth of the community is wasted.

The anxiety to shine, and to be fully up to the mark, or in other words, to be fashionable and respectable, in the upper walks of life, entails an enormous expense, and great waste of the country's wealth.

No one, for instance, can visit Hyde Park during the season without being struck by the magnificent gorgeousness of the display, but what do these displays cost? In an article in *Fraser's Magazine* for October, 1872, it is shown that something like £370,000,000 is expended annually upon luxuries by about 450,000 families. It would be folly to assume that all this is waste, but there can be no doubt but that a considerable amount of it might be saved without any detriment either to the health or comfort of those concerned. These large amounts are not paid to purchase comforts, but they are the price of fashion and show, the parties often finding the bargain to bring loss and misery, instead of happiness and comfort.

Again, the ideas which many of the young ladies and gentlemen in the upper walks of life cherish in reference to work, exercise a pernicious influence upon their conduct in life, and upon the country's wealth. Many of them think it beneath them to put their hands to any manner of work. Like drones in a hive, they consume the produce which is gathered, but they make no honey, and not only does society lose the benefit of their services as producers, but they are among the most extravagant of consumers. There is thus a double loss—first, the loss of their labour, and second, the loss by their extravagance. They move, however, in a

sphere too respectable to stoop to labour; they are the slaves of foolish fashion, and society has to bear the loss thereof. I might go on, and give many other instances of the follies of fashion, and of the waste resulting therefrom, but time will not permit, and it is needless, because the illustrations given are but samples of numerous similar cases with which all will be familiar. The loss to the country from these causes it is difficult to estimate, but I think I shall be within the mark if I put it down at £120,000,000 per annum.

Let it be borne in mind, however, that this is a matter purely of estimate. There are no statistics or data upon which to form a calculation, and therefore every one must use his own judgment in this matter, so far as regards the resulting loss.

As we proceed in our inquiry, however, we shall find ourselves getting more and more from the region of estimate into that of reliable statistics, though perhaps in some cases they may not be so definite as in others.

I proceed now to notice some of the losses which result from erroneous and imperfect legislation, and from the want of more complete and perfect sanitary, and, perhaps, in some cases, of individual arrangements.

Take, in the first place, our national government expenditure. Last year this was £71,860,000. Who will say that this is not both extravagant and wasteful? It might easily be reduced by £20,000,000, especially if some arrangement were made enabling the soldiers and sailors to engage in some employment whereby they might, at least, partially maintain themselves, and thus become producers of wealth.

Then again, the game laws are a fruitful source of loss and waste to the community. It is said that four rabbits or hares will devour as much as one sheep, and they do not, as sheep do, enrich the land by their manure. Then there is the preservation of commons

for shooting, of forests for deer-stalking, &c. ; all put together makes the loss to the nation a serious question. In 1870, 59,627 persons took out licences to kill game ; and when we hear of some of them shooting 500 head of game in one day, it will give us some conception of the magnitude of the loss sustained. The loss, however, is not simply in what the game consumes, but also in the drawback upon the farmer's energies. The farmer does not see the good of improving his crops to be devoured by game ; and if to these we add the loss of time of the gamekeepers, we shall find that the total loss or waste cannot be less than £20,000,000 per annum. It may be considerably more.

Again, the intricacies and difficulties, and expenses in the transfer of land, in settling disputed points of property in Chancery, &c., are a fearful tax upon the community, both as a burden of taxation and as a repressive influence in preventing the development of those energies which tend to elevate a population. When the transfer of a plot of ground occupies months of time and cost £30 or £40 or more, when it might be done in a week at a cost of as many shillings, it will give an idea as to the loss from this source. It cannot be less than something like £5,000,000 per annum.

Another and most prolific source of waste arises from want of proper regulations in regard to the sewage of our dwellings. This is almost universally run into our streams, polluting them, and poisoning the atmosphere of the country, thus creating diseases of all kinds, and shortening the lives of our population in many cases to a very considerable extent, and washing down our rivers those materials which would best enrich our soils, and give us prolific crops of all kinds of food.

To show the great good which would result from the use of the sewage of our towns if applied to agricultural purposes, I may refer to a fact in connection with the Croydon Board of Health. That board took a plot of

land of 300 acres in extent in order to make use of their sewage. It was near Beddington railway station, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Croydon. Naturally the land is worth from 30s. to 40s. per acre, but having carried their sewage to it they sublet it to Mr. Marriage at £5 per acre, and so much has the value of the land increased by the use of this sewage, that it was stated in evidence before a committee of the House of Commons that if this land had to be re-let now, it would fetch £15 per acre. What we lose, therefore, by this folly of running down our rivers what ought to go to enrich our land is simply incalculable. In many districts the crops would be more than double; indeed, the yielding power of the soil appears hardly to have any limit. It gives back in produce what it receives in manure, and there can be no doubt that if the most were made of the sewage of our population, and our farming were carried on upon the most scientific principles, that the crops of these islands would support, not a population of 30 millions merely, but of four times that number. This, however, implies a great advance in our arrangements, and considerable improvement in our agriculture, and lies, therefore, somewhat beyond the province of our present inquiry. There might, however, be such immediate arrangements made for the utilisation of our refuse and sewage as would give us better sanitary regulations and lessen our disease, and thus prove a saving to the country of some £30,000,000 or £40,000,000 per annum.

There is not only much loss and waste by defective agriculture, and by the waste of our sewage, but also by an injudicious and luxurious use of food, especially of animal food. Chemistry and physiology have demonstrated the fact that vegetables—that is, the cereals—contain all the elements that there are in animal food, and, further, that an excessive use of animal food is not only useless, but pernicious. Many

of the working classes, and most of the other classes of society err on the side of excess in this respect. Now, it can be proved that a shilling's worth of flour or oatmeal, as well as other vegetable foods, will give as much nourishment as 5s. worth of animal food, and, therefore, an extensive use of animal food must greatly enhance the cost of living. It would be prudent economy, therefore, in many families to diminish their consumption of animal food; they would thereby improve their health and lessen their expenses; and if we assume that, on the average, the 6,000,000 families of the United Kingdom reduced their consumption of animal food by one pound per week, it would give a saving of £10,000,000 or £12,000,000 per annum. A like economy might be practised in many other articles of food, and thus a saving of at least £20,000,000 yearly effected. If we attended to the old proverb, which says, "Live not to eat, but eat to live," it would immensely improve our health and economise our resources.

But of all the evils producing loss and waste to the country, none are at all to be compared to those arising from the use of narcotic stimulants, intoxicating drinks, and tobacco. Upon tobacco alone it is computed that there was expended in 1872 the sum of £14,614,872; what the indirect losses, in the mischief to health, &c., were, we have no means of computing.

The amount of money spent in the purchase of intoxicating liquors during the year 1872, amounted to the enormous sum of £131,601,490.

During the three years ending 1860 the total amount expended upon intoxicating liquors in the United Kingdom was £273,834,987, or £91,278,329 per annum. So that if we compare 1872 with twelve years ago we shall find that there has been an increase in the expenditure upon intoxicating liquors of upwards of forty-four per cent.

THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT WILL GIVE PARTICULARS  
OF THE EXPENDITURE.

British Spirits, <sup>1</sup> 26,872,183 gallons at 20s. per gallon .....	£26,872,183
Foreign Spirits, <sup>2</sup> 9,030,835 gallons at 24s. per gallon .....	10,837,002
Wine, <sup>3</sup> 16,873,955 gallons at 18s. per gallon .....	15,186,559
BEER.	
Sugar <sup>4</sup> used in brewing 336,367 cwt., equi- valent to 1,435,165 bushels of malt. Malt <sup>5</sup> used 55,569,092 bushels. Total 57,004,257 bushels, or equal to 1026,076,680 gallons of beer, at 1s. 6d. per gallon .....	76,955,746
British Wines, <sup>6</sup> Cider, &c., 17,500,000 gallons, at 2s. per gallon.....	1,750,000
Total.....	<u>£131,601,490</u>

It is a humiliating and painful thought, that a country priding itself upon its Christianity should spend upon its gratification and licentiousness such an appalling sum. We contribute some £700,000 or £800,000 per annum for the evangelisation of the world, and take

1 See Trade and Navigation Returns for February, 1873, page 72.

2     "                 "                 "                 December, 1872, page 12.

3     "                 "                 "                 December, 1872, page 14.

4     "                 "                 "                 February, 1873, page 70.

5     "                 "                 "                 February, 1873, page 71.

6 These are estimated, there being no returns published.

In a Report recently published, addressed to Mr. Bass, entitled "An estimate of the amount of taxation falling on the working classes of the United Kingdom," Professor Leoni Levi (see page 31 of Report) estimates the expenditure on intoxicating liquors at £88,000,000.

It would be well if the Professor would explain to the public—

First—How it is he gives an estimate, when there are reliable returns which he might give; and—

Second—How it comes to pass that his estimate is so much below the actual facts of the case.

These points especially need explanation, seeing that the Report is addressed to Mr. Bass, the great brewer.

credit to ourselves for doing it, whilst every two days we spend the like amount upon our own sensuality.

Unfortunately the £131,601,490 is not the total of the mischief or waste. Its expenditure is followed by a train of most deplorable evils and losses such as result from no other, nor probably from all other causes combined.

And first, there is the waste of grain. To manufacture the £131,601,490 worth of intoxicating liquors consumed in 1872, there would be needed at least 80,000,000 bushels of grain or produce, which, if converted into flour and baked into bread, would make 1,200,000,000 4lb. loaves, giving about 190 loaves per annum to every family in the United Kingdom, or, it would supply the entire population of the country with bread for more than one-third of the entire year.

Another evil that results from this expenditure upon intoxicating liquors, is the taxation for poors' and police rates. For the year ending Lady-day, 1871, these reached the sum of £13,796,806. On all hands it is admitted that intemperance is the main cause both of crime and pauperism, so that, especially with the enormous foreign trade which we have recently had, were it not for this deplorable vice we should scarcely need, on these accounts, to be taxed at all.

And then, again, there is the loss of time and labour through drunkenness. This was estimated by the Parliamentary Committee of 1834 at £50,000,000 yearly; and it is to be feared that the high wages of the last year or two have increased the loss of work. This is rendered probable by the testimony of those who are employers of labour, by the returns of drunkenness, which in 1871 were 142,343, against 131,870 in 1870, and 122,310 in 1869, also from the fact that the great increase in the consumption of intoxicating liquors in 1872 was in beer and British spirits, the liquors mostly consumed by the working classes; for whilst wine increased but  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. and foreign

spirits  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., beer increased  $13\frac{1}{2}$  and British spirits  $11\frac{1}{5}$  per cent.

Then, again, society suffers not only from the idleness, loss of time, and incapacity of those who are in the habit of getting drunk, but also from the loss of the labour of those who are engaged in the trade ; also of the loss of labour of the paupers, criminals, vagrants, &c. Then there is the waste time of jurors, witnesses, lawyers, policemen, and others, who are employed to protect society from the evils arising from the nation's intemperance.

There is also the destruction of property, accidents, loss of life, 60,000 premature deaths annually, the public and private charges for insanity, sickness, and other evils arising from this cause, making a loss to the country that is truly deplorable.

It has been shown that the direct cost to the country arising from the money expended upon intoxicating liquors in 1872 would not be less than £131,601,490. At a very low estimate it is calculated that the indirect losses, that is, the money it takes to atone for the mischiefs resulting from the drink, will be fully equal to the first cost. This would give us a total of direct and indirect loss to the country of £263,202,980 arising from the use of intoxicating liquors. If to this we add the cost of tobacco, it will give a loss to the country in 1872 of £277,817,852 arising from these two sources alone.

The entire national debt of the United Kingdom last year amounted to £791,890,970, so that if the direct and indirect cost to the country arising from drink and tobacco were saved, in three years it would more than pay off the national debt. The total value of the wealth or property of the United Kingdom of all descriptions is estimated, by Mr. Dudley Baxter, at £6,000,000,000. In twenty-five years it would double this, and leave an handsome surplus into the bargain.

There is one item of loss, which in these inquiries is



often overlooked. I refer to the profits which would arise from the accumulation of wealth, if it were saved instead of being wasted. A person, by a little extra economy, saves £100, which in former years he has wasted. At 5 per cent. interest that would become £105 for the second year, and if allowed to accumulate at compound interest for twenty years it will amount to £268. If the saving goes on, and the £100 be saved and added each year, in twenty years it will reach the sum of £3,306. 5s. If, therefore, the 277 millions lost through drink and tobacco were saved, or even 200 millions of it, it would rapidly accumulate, and re-act upon society by a reproductive demand which would create abundant employment for all, and banish pauperism with all its associated evils from our land.

Let it not be understood that we are at all advocating a sordid piling up of wealth. Man was made for higher purposes than to become a mere hoarder of wealth. He is possessed of a two-fold nature, the physical and the intellectual. The latter is infinitely more important than the former, and ought to receive more of his attention. At the present time there is in this country, in the midst of abundance of wealth, a perpetual struggle for subsistence going on. This would never occur were it not for the terrible waste that takes place. I have endeavoured to point out this waste, and show the possibility of rapidly accumulating wealth,—not in order to stimulate the unworthy passion of miserliness, but in order to illustrate the wise and abundant provision in nature for man's happiness and well-being. If all labour were wisely directed, and wealth properly appropriated, the struggle for existence would vanish, the task of providing the necessities and comforts of life would be an easy one, more attention might be devoted to the higher nature of man, and thus he would more completely answer the great end of his being.

It is an admitted fact in political economy, that

labour is the only source of value, or, in other words, of wealth. As a rule, things are valuable in proportion to the amount of wages paid in their production. It will follow, therefore, that the wages of one week, if properly expended, will create a demand for the labour of the succeeding week. If, therefore, there were only the wages fund to fall back upon, this, if properly applied, would keep the industrial ball rolling; but, when we remember that there is an accumulated capital that needs employment, and must find employment in some way or other by purchasing labour, or the products of labour—which is the same thing; it will be manifest, therefore, that there is something radically wrong in our economical arrangements and our habits, else we could not possibly have such an amount of pauperism and destitution in our midst. What is that something?

If a farmer, in cultivating his land, paid all his attention to getting as much out of his soil as possible, and neglecting to recuperate the soil in return for what it yielded, if he was always trying to reap and never manured, or, if he only did this very partially, any one will see that the land must rapidly become impoverished; he might prune his hedges so as to get more sun upon the land, or he might try to make a more perfect arrangement among his workmen, &c., and thus by these auxiliary arrangements improve the crop to some extent, but he could only get a satisfactory crop by keeping the land in good heart. He must return in the shape of manure what he gets in the way of produce, otherwise all the arrangements in the world will not prevent the land from becoming poor.

It is very much the same in the economical arrangements of society. The capital or wages fund of the country, in which we include the skill and industry of the artisan, is the property that (to carry out the illustration) is being farmed out. But if one-half of it be wasted, the fund or capital becomes diminished, and

like the land, which was drawn upon without being replenished, it becomes impoverished. When we waste £131,000,000 in drink, when there are 80,000,000 bushels of grain or produce destroyed to provide the drink, when we have from 15 to 20 millions per annum of taxes imposed to keep those who are impoverished, or made criminal thereby, when the time, or, in other words, the industry of our artisans is frittered away in idleness or incapacity, and when by the influence of the drink the physical capabilities of the men become reduced, when disease is engendered, and life is shortened, all these are so many heavy drafts upon the capital or producing fund. Under such circumstances, Is it a matter of wonder if the estate, or in other words, if the population becomes poor? The thing is inevitable, and we may try to amend our poor-laws, or get better dwellings for the working classes, or improve the waste lands of the country—all good in their way—but they can never compensate for the waste of one-half the nation's income. The wages fund of the country must be recouped, or it becomes, like the land, impoverished, and though with a foreign demand of £255,000,000 of trade we may not feel so greatly the mischief of our folly, if our foreign trade had to fall off to what it was ten years ago, viz., 140 or 150 millions instead of 255 millions annually, our nation would be in a more deplorable plight, so far as regards its pauperism, than ever it has been in its history. Why? Because the people generally have been drawing more largely upon the wages fund, and have wholly neglected to recoup the same by any providence or saving on their part.

Mr. Dudley Baxter, in 1870, estimated the total annual income of the people of the United Kingdom at £860,000,000. In 1872 it was probably £30,000,000, or £40,000,000 more, which, doubtless, mainly went into the pockets of the working class. So that we shall not be far from the mark if we estimate it at £900,000,000.

If we summarise and tabulate the figures we have given in this essay as to the amount of waste, we shall find that the loss bears a frightful proportion to the income.

ESTIMATE OF WASTE OR LOSS ARISING FROM  
VARIOUS SOURCES.

Waste through the follies of fashion..	£120,000,000
Extravagant Government expenditure	20,000,000
Loss arising from game laws .....	20,000,000
Loss through the costliness of law, &c.	5,000,000
Loss through waste of sewage, &c....	30,000,000
Waste arising from excess and luxury in food .....	20,000,000
Cost of tobacco .....	14,000,000
Direct and indirect cost of drink.....	262,000,000
Total annual loss or waste .....	<u>£491,000,000</u>

Of course, these losses are not all abstracted from the wages fund, though they are all lost to the wages fund, and we shall not be far wide of the mark if we say that one-half the income of the United Kingdom is lost or frittered away upon what yields no value return to the community.

In this argument, little or no notice has been taken of the moral bearings of the question. Of the items of expense or loss which we have named, some will have a much more pernicious influence in this respect than others, and also a more injurious influence economically. In this respect the expenditure upon intoxicating liquors stand out as pre-eminently disastrous.

The question as to the utility of alcoholic liquors is one that does not lie within our province to discuss, if it were, we might adduce both physiology, science, and experience to show that men enjoy better health, and live longer without them, than with them. But admitting the statement as to the good of these drinks to be all that is said, there is no sane person who will

plead for an expenditure of 131 millions a year upon them. One-fifth or one-sixth of the amount would be amply sufficient to supply any supposed reasonable requirements ; the other five-sixths represent the excess, or what results from intemperance, the bitter consequences of which we daily reap in the crime, pauperism, social misery, and degradation of the people.

Political economists are sometimes said to have no conscience ; this has arisen from the fact that they have sometimes advocated measures which appeared to clash with morality. To do this would be mistaken political economy, for whilst it is true that righteousness exalteth a nation in virtue, &c., it is equally true that it promotes its material prosperity ; and no nation can long maintain an exalted commercial position that disregards the laws of economical morality, whether it be in the matter of getting or using.

The mischiefs resulting from our enormous expenditure upon alcoholic liquors not only tell upon our material welfare, but also upon our social and moral wellbeing. Nothing so much tends to create the extremes of immense wealth and deepest poverty. Homes are rendered miserable, social demoralisation is created, political corruption is engendered, whilst morality, religion, education, and all the virtues which go to exalt humanity, are stunted and obstructed ; and (is it possible ?) for these appalling results, this nation—priding itself upon its Christianity, education, &c.—pays in one way or another £262,000,000 annually ! If the money were paid to get rid of the evils, it would be a rational and commendable expenditure ; but to buy them, and at such a price, is folly that could not be realised as possible were it not manifest before our eyes.

But it is said, what would you do with all the wealth that would be realised if this extravagant waste did not exist ? To put such a question is a high compliment to the argument advanced—it is an admission of its truth. In answering the question I need not go into details, but

the adoption of these principles would rapidly result in the following improvements :—1st. A vast increase in the comforts of the working classes, and of society generally, in the shape of better dwellings, better furniture, and possibly a lessening of their hours of labour. 2nd. There would be rapid and great sanitary improvements in all our social arrangements, and, as a consequence, a minimum amount of disease and social misery. 3rd. The struggle for existence would be diminished, more time and attention would be devoted to the nobler objects of life, and to the culture of the higher nature of man. 4th. The great obstructive to social and religious progress being removed, the moral condition of the people would quickly improve, education would be extended, and all the blessings resulting from these improvements would be rapidly realised.

To secure these results, and bring mankind to a wiser course of action, a knowledge by them of the economic laws of our being is needful. A society like the present cannot, therefore, better employ its great resources than by informing the community upon the facts and principles which lie at the root of these most deplorable of evils.

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## O U R   N A T I O N A L   R E S O U R C E S , A N D   H O W   T H E Y   A R E   W A S T E D .

*An omitted chapter in Political Economy.*









